Design Resource

Rock Garden of Chandigarh

Waste Material sculptures by Nek Chand

by
Palash Vaswani
IDC, IIT Bombay

Source:
http://www.dsource.in/resource/rock-garden-chandigarh

1. Introduction
2. The Rock Garden
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Introduction

The Rock Garden of Chandigarh is a place famous for its creativity and beautiful sculptures made out of disregarded waste material. It gives a feel of a world where everything imaginable is created by human hands. This sculpture garden, also known as Nek Chand's Rock Garden, is named after its founder Nek Chand; a government official who began this garden as a hobby. However at present, it has grown to become a major tourist attraction with approximately five thousand daily visitors and spreads over an area of forty-acres. It is one of the leading tourist attractions of Chandigarh city and its immense and unique sculptures have grabbed the attention of people from all over the world.

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The Rock Garden

Nek Chand, a road inspector in early fifties, collected lots of stones and debris from villages destroyed in 1958 for creation Chandigarh city. The garden started taking shape with the demolished wastes and scrap materials in 1960, when first 2000 sculptures were created in secrecy and on the gorges of Sukhna Lake. Though it was considered illegal, Nek Chand continued to build the garden until 1975, when he was discovered and started gathering public support for the functioning of the garden. By the time the government took over the garden, it had grown to about 12 acres with complex of interconnected patios, each filled with hundreds of pottery-covered concrete sculptures of dancers, musicians and animals. Nek Chand was highly praised for his single-handed effort and was given the honorary title of the sub-divisional engineer. He continued to take care of maintenance work in the garden. Later, the Government of India also honoured him with the title of 'Padma Shri'.

The most distinctive feature of the Rock garden is that it is completely made of waste materials, recycled industrial scraps, home scrap and other waste. Nek Chand, along with the government's help, set up centers to collect rags and ceramics, which were then used to continue building the various sculptures in the garden. The Rock Garden is built like a maze with interlinking paths and branched off directions. Thus, one has to be careful and methodical if one wants to look at all the exhibits. One can easily lose track of the paths and can miss many displays as it branches off in two directions. One must be sure to go in through one path and come out through another.

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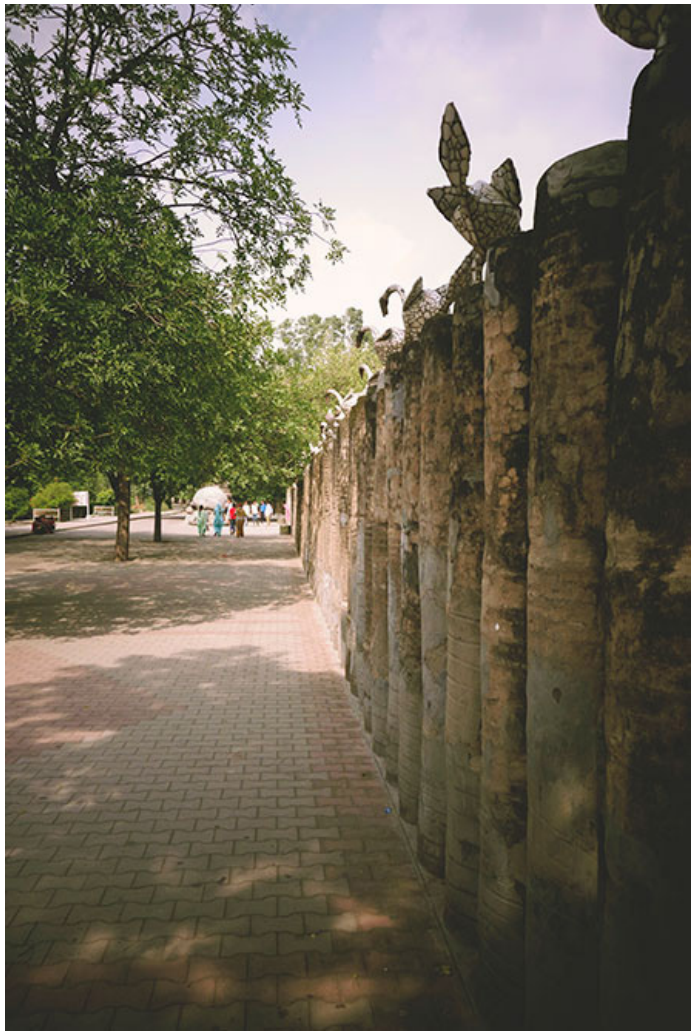

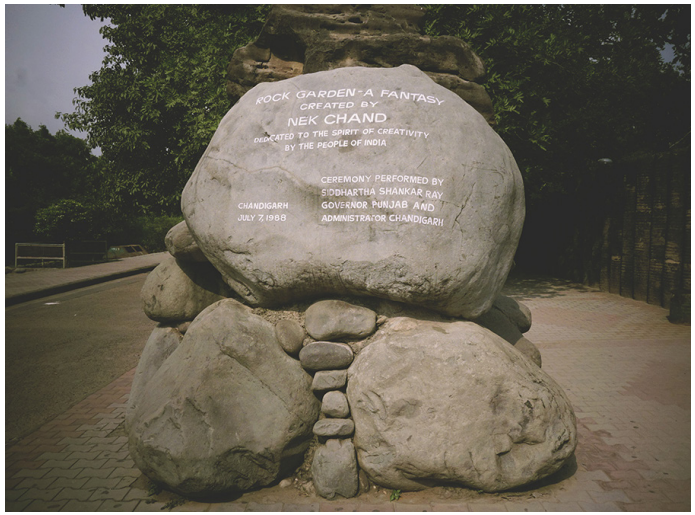

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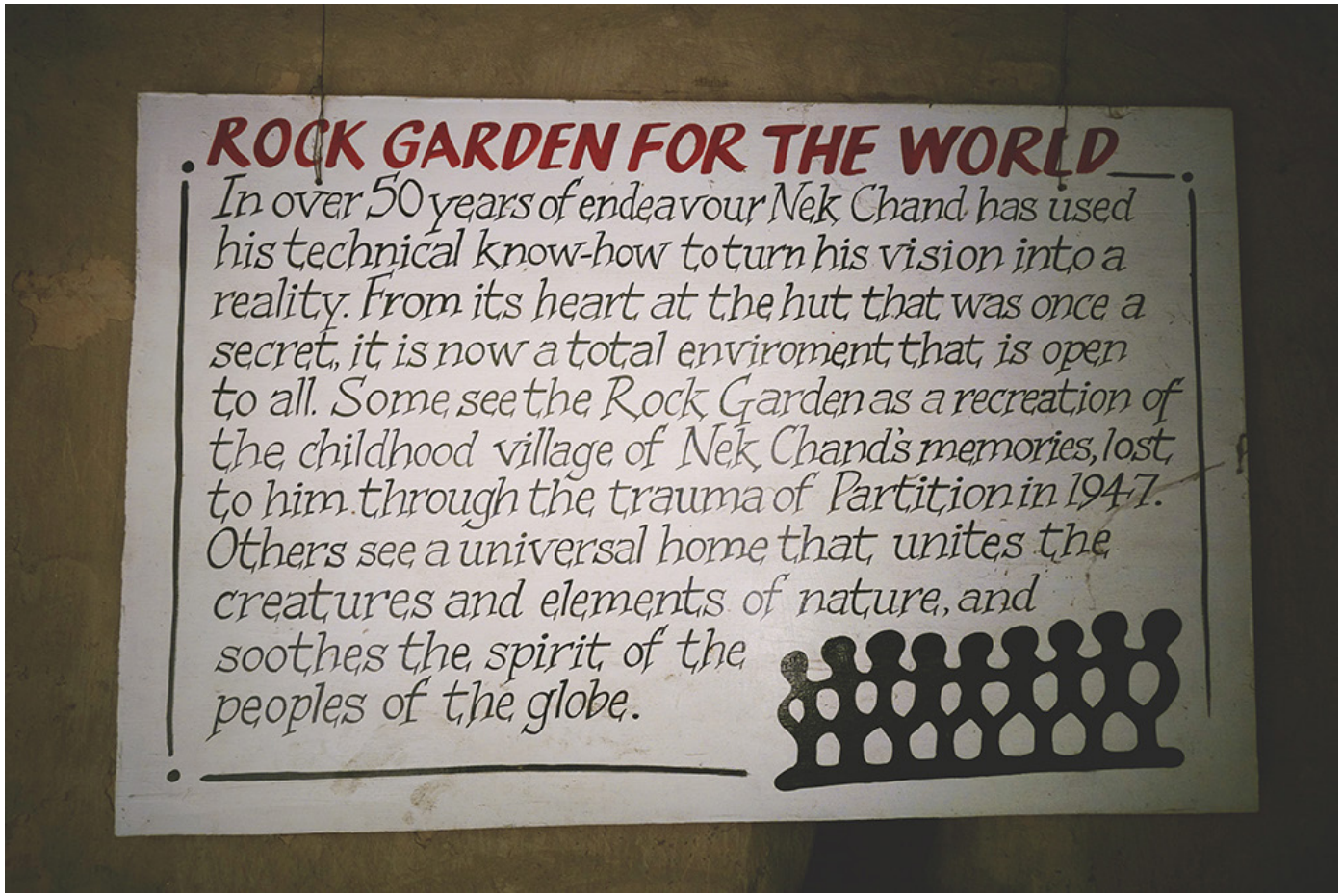

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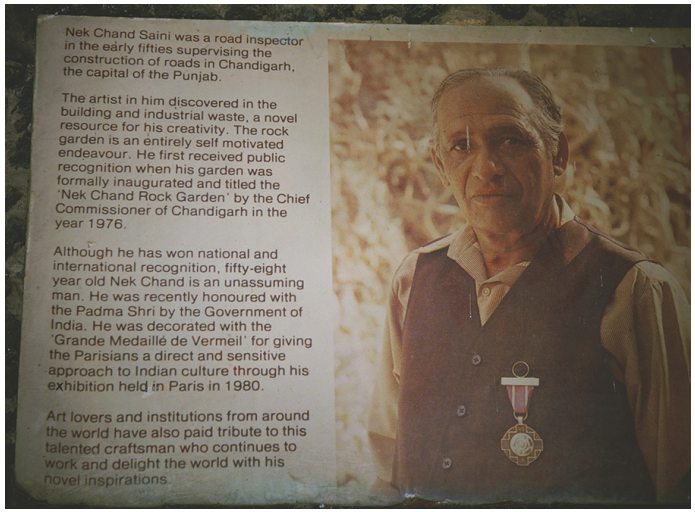

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This documentation was done by Palash Vaswani, Design Associate at IDC, IIT Bombay.

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